



INVESTING IN SOCIAL INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN TANZANIA

HDIF'S REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 2013-2018

Over the last decade, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and its development partners have significantly expanded access to basic social services and progressed the country aggressively towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their successors, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Primary school enrolment has reached 94 per cent^Q, and the proportion enrolled in secondary school is steadily rising; deaths from malaria have halved, HIV prevalence has stabilised, and infant and child mortality rates have declined. Nevertheless, widespread poverty still persists and Tanzania is grappling with the significant challenges associated with delivering services designed to alleviate poverty and support economic empowerment.

In November 2015 during the inauguration of the new Parliament, President John Pombe Magufuli emphasised the urgent need for Tanzania to industrialise in order to create jobs for millions of

young Tanzanians and to build a modern economy for the country and its people. For the country's young people to play a role, however, they need to be equipped with the right skills and entrepreneurship opportunities to help the country to achieve its vision. Yet unemployment rates are high, and limited resources within the education system mean few leave school with the skills that employers are looking for.

Addressing the challenges facing Tanzania is impossible without widened participation in social innovation. To pave the way for this, significant investments in resources that nurture the skill sets of individuals and teams are essential. Furthermore, investment in institutions to drive change at a national level, support for infrastructure and policy are all needed to strengthen the innovation environment. The country has a long and vibrant history of harnessing creativity and entrepreneurialism to propel social impact and progress. With the right support, including both skills and resources, ideas can

Above
Interns from
Digital
Opportunity Trust
(DOT)'s Fusion
programme

^Q [www.epdc.org/
sites/default/files/
documents/
EPDC%20
NEP_Tanzania.pdf](http://www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/EPDC%20NEP_Tanzania.pdf)



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flourish and grow from basic concepts to innovations at scale.

The innovation ecosystem in Tanzania has developed rapidly over the past five years with increasing numbers of individuals and institutions stepping up and becoming more active, visible and connected than ever before. During this time, the country's ranking in the Global Innovation Index^Q has climbed 27 positions (from 123 in 2013 to 92 in 2018) – a remarkable achievement for a country lacking a strong innovation environment. New start-ups and hubs are cropping up every day and there is a growing awareness of the role that innovation can play in finding solutions to large and pervasive development challenges. Whilst Tanzania has progressed, the innovation ecosystem is still in its early stage where institutions are constrained by limited resources and competing priorities.

The Human Development Innovation Fund (HDIF) is a programme that aims to accelerate human development through driving innovative solutions to improve the quality, value for money and sustainability of basic services in the education, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sectors.

A key goal of the programme is to act as a catalyst for change by increasing knowledge and understanding about the complex practice of social innovation in Tanzania that can be used by others. This report aims to do just that and is a curation of our collective understanding

of how to improve the use, scale, and adoption of innovation in Tanzania to advance access to basic services and how best to strengthen the innovation ecosystem as a whole.

We also share the lessons we have learned and make recommendations based on our experiences of identifying and nurturing diverse talent, and empowering a new generation to drive social innovation in Tanzania. We believe these reflections have a broader applicability for funders and policymakers in similar countries.

Given the many challenges and opportunities associated with innovation and the unique focus areas of different organisations, this report is intended to be viewed as a set of opinions that can be used as a guiding resource for

Above
A lab technician tests sputum samples using a TB-detection trained 'Hero Rat'.

HDIF intends to harness what it has learned for others to capitalise on this momentum, ensure that mistakes are not replicated, and take best practice approaches to scale.



Left
Children enjoy watching an episode of Ubongo Learning's popular edutainment programme 'Akili and Me'.

^Q <https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/gii-2018-report>



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innovation funders, policymakers and practitioners. HDIF is a proud champion of some of the most inspiring and creative Tanzanian innovators in the country – individuals and organisations who are committing time, energy, and resources to help address some of the country's toughest development challenges. Over the past five years, we have had the great fortune of supporting them to bring their ideas to fruition and test out new ways of doing things. Innovation is risky, and whilst there have been some big wins and success stories, there are times where things have not worked out as envisaged – but we have learned a lot in the process. HDIF intends to share what it has learned for others to capitalise on, to help ensure that mistakes are not replicated, that limited resources are used effectively, and to take best practice approaches to scale.

The report is divided into three sections that share a series of insights and put forward recommendations based on HDIF's experiences. In particular, the report identifies three key lessons that have helped to shape the programme (see 'Summary of recommendations', overleaf). Fostering innovation in a rapidly evolving ecosystem such as Tanzania is complex and requires being open to continuously learning and adapting to fluctuations and changes. **Chapter 1** looks at what HDIF has learned as a result of being embedded within the rapidly changing innovation ecosystem, and makes recommendations on how best to support the connections and collaborations required for an ecosystem to function effectively.

Chapter 2 explores what HDIF has learned about catalysing innovations in an early-stage ecosystem through tailored approaches that respond to the needs of an individual innovation, and that can be adapted at different stages of the innovation journey. **Chapter 3** captures HDIF's approach to fostering a culture of learning across the team, with partners and grantees, to support the adaptations that are necessary within any innovation programme of this scale and ambition.

We urge our partners to reflect on these recommendations and to consider how these can be applied to support social innovation that creates real and lasting change, now and in the future.

The report makes a number of practicable and actionable recommendations based on HDIF's collective insights that aim at removing barriers to scaling innovation. It is not a full innovation ecosystem analysis or a complete compendium of findings and recommendations to build Tanzania's innovation ecosystem. Instead, it makes a compelling case for various types of investment in innovation and technology in Tanzania.

Above
Gongali Model
brings clean
water and jobs
to communities
in Arusha.

This report documents the lessons we have learned and makes recommendations based on our experiences of identifying and nurturing diverse talent, and empowering a new generation to drive social innovation in Tanzania.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1 INVEST IN THE ECOSYSTEM

- Take a systems approach to designing and implementing innovation investments
- Invest strategically in innovative individuals and networks
- Address the skills gaps that create bottlenecks in the ecosystem and empower youth to be drivers of innovation
- Use universally agreed definitions and jargon-free frameworks and tools to build innovation-related skills
- Design inclusive activities for healthier and more diverse networks.

2 CUSTOMISE APPROACHES TO ENABLE INNOVATIONS

- Tailor funding and support mechanisms to meet the needs of industry sub-sectors surrounding specific innovations
- Invest in and encourage collaborative innovations
- Make learning a legitimate, acceptable outcome for innovations in an early-stage innovation ecosystem.

3 LEARN, SHARE, AND ADAPT

- Set clear targets, timelines, and decision-making processes to facilitate strategic and timely adaptation
- Invest in systems that support evidence and learning, including flexible and adaptable staffing and financial structures.

This is a summary of HDIF's report 'Investing in Social Innovation and Technology in Tanzania: HDIF's reflections and recommendations 2013-2018.' For a full copy of the report, please contact the HDIF team or visit the programme website.

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